DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 264 225 SP 026 931

AUTHOR Brodbelt, Samuel; Wall, Robert E.
TITLE Student-Teacher Socialization: Role Model Influences.
PUB DATE Feb 85
NOTE 20p.; Paper presented at the Eastern Educational Research Association Conference (Virginia Beach, VA, February 7-9, 1985).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Cooperating Teachers; Higher Education; Interpersonal Relationship; Preservice Teacher Education; *Role Models; *Student Teacher Attitudes; *Student Teachers; *Teacher Student Relationship

ABSTRACT

Role model selection by student teachers and their classroom supervising teachers, the influence of status, and circumstances and issues related to the selection were investigated. Of 200 questionnaires mailed to student teachers, 147 usable forms were returned; of 320 questionnaires mailed to supervising teachers, 223 were returned (70%). student teachers and supervising teachers include college professor, chairperson, colleagues, classroom teacher and other school administrators. Fifty percent of the student teachers indicated that their supervising teacher was the primary source of professional advice, personal friends were second, other student teachers were third, and the college supervisor was the fourth most common choice. In contrast, supervising teachers reported their choices as colleagues, principal, and supervisor, ranked 1 to 3 respectively. The college supervisor was mentioned least often. This study provides evidence of the need of teacher education programs to recognize the effect of role models upon the professional development and performance of teachers. (Author/KM)

STUDENT-TEACHER SOCIALIZATION: ROLE MODEL INFLUENCES

Written by

Samuel Brodbelt
Professor of Secondary Education

and

Robert E. Wall
Professor of General Education

Acknowledgement: The authors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of acknowledge the cooperation of Marilyn Nicholas, Ph.D., Director of the student teaching office (C.A.S.E.), Towson State University

Presented at the Eastern Educational Research Association Conference,
February 7-9, 1985
Virginia Beach, Virginia

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According to Charles Cooley in Human Nature and the Social Order, the individual (self) is socialized by others into the culture (society). Cooley rated primary groups as the more important setting for acquiring social attitudes and skills. The primary group constitutes a more close and intimate association such as the family, playmates, kinfolks that are frequently visited, and neighbors. In those face-to-face associations one learns the attitudes, values and skills necessary to react with others and develops a conception of himself in relation with others. George Mead in Mind, Self, and Society contributed the concept of the "significant others" who are modeled by acting out their life roles; from those roles the individual is able to comprehend the place of people within the social system. Individuals learn the role-system that operates in the family, church, social groups as well as those in the school setting.

In a similar fashion the teacher trainee has observed teaching role models through the secondary program and in college where the professor serves as an active teaching model. The actual placement of the student teacher with a supervising teacher from six to fifteen weeks becomes the final step in the formal development of the teacher. Even after the student teacher takes over the classroom on a full time basis, the supervising teacher remains in the room or nearby in the hallways or lounge to be available in case things go awry for the

student teacher. Furthermore, at the end of the day the supervising teacher exerts control by offering advice and criticism which helps ensure conformity to the role-modeling provided by the supervising teacher. Thus, the socialization process continues. One of the earliest studies (Waller, 1932, p. 389) found that "the significant people for teachers are other teachers" and the supervising teacher (sometimes called the cooperating teacher) constitutes the most significant person in the prospective teacher's professional development.

If the socialization process is defined as the acquisition of the attitudes, values, perspectives, and roles of a new status position, than the student teaching assignment is a key process in socialization. As a mechanism of social learning there are two crucial steps that dominate the student teaching experience. The first step is imitation and identification. Here the student teacher perceives the supervising teacher to be the model of good teaching and will imitate the teaching style of the supervising teacher closely patterning his/her procedures, routines, and teaching style. The close, imitative behaviors are ensured by the regular and systematic observation and evaluation that leads to a reinforcement of imitative behaviors. The second step of socialization is that of dependence-attachment. Dependence is the social and emotional relationship of one actor to the other. In this situation, the student teacher is dependent

upon a long-term evaluation, usually in the form of a letter grade, A-F or Pass-Fail, and a letter of recommendation. (Gewitz, p. 57-212 in Goslin, 1969) The quarter or semester student teaching assignment is one of close contact on an all-day basis and leads to a bonding relationship of dependence if not attachment. More recently this process has been described as mentoring. Mentoring is the selection of a professional role model for career guidance and sponsorship. The mentor socializes the student teacher into the norms and expectations of the teaching profession. There are three stages to socialization.*

The importance of the role-set to socialization

In the school setting the student teacher enters an atmosphere where teaching behaviors are polished and refined. The supervising teacher will likely be the primary influence in the acquisition of specific teaching behaviors. To a lesser degree the college supervisor, other teachers in the assigned school, as well as the departmental

*The National League for Nursing, Socialization and Resocialization of Nurses for Professional Nursing Practice, N.Y.: National League for Nursing, Nov., 1976, p. 41. Socialization is divided into three stages: the anticipatory stage, the attachment stage, and the internalization stage.

chairperson, principal, and other school personnel will contribute their part as role models. Furthermore, certain locations such as the faculty lounge provides an opportunity for the student teacher to hear first hand new, different, and insider opinions about teaching. Finally, the role-set of other student teachers in the seminar class, teaching center, or dormitory will provide another sounding board for discussing and formulating attitudes towards teaching. The significance of this was borne out when the questionnaire results indicated that a surprisingly large number of student teachers indicated they discussed most of their professional problems with friends and other student teachers.

The supervising teacher as the dominant role-model

Early in the student teaching experience the student teacher will be socialized into the school bureaucracy. First, the student teacher is required to observe the supervising teacher for several weeks. During that initiation period the student teacher learns classroom routines, memorizes the pupil names, observes classroom management techniques and acquires primarily a single model of teaching; for the student teacher, the classroom becomes his complete miniaturized social world for the next six to fifteen weeks. The student teacher as a temporary guest in that school and classroom will possess less authority and will perceive of the supervising teacher as a tenured person (a

necessary requirement for placement of the student teacher is most states). Most importantly, the student teacher is fully aware that the supervising teacher is supposed to be superior in teaching skills, hence the desirable role-model to be emulated. Modeling is the process of observing the skill of another, especially one who is closely connected with the observed. Adaptive behavior of the action being modeled is most likely when there is congruence of goals and close association of the observer to the action being observed. Finally, as the observer (student teacher) has the opportunity to practice the behavior, that behavior will be more quickly and permanently acquired. (Bandura, 1977, p. 50-55) The present study was designed to determine if the student-teacher's perceptions concerning the importance of the supervising teacher in their development as a teacher would conform to the findings reported in the literature. If supervising teachers are this important, then student teachers should be placed only with superior supervising teachers.

The data gatherings procedures

In order to study the factors that educators perceived as influencing their teaching, two questionnaires were developed that focused on the problems, situations, and developmental aspects of the student teaching experience that are cited frequently in the literature. The questionnaires were organized to: first, gather information about the teacher's

professional preparation (planning, classroom management, discipline methods-techniques, and human relations); second, to identify role models and the degree of influence and conformity that is perceived as necessary in informal contacts in the teaching lounge. One questionnaire was administered to pre-service teachers (student teachers) and the other to in-service (supervising) teachers. Both populations were from a large metropolitan area in the Middle Atlantic states region. The questionnaire to student teachers was administered at the end of the student teaching experience, May, 1984, and December, 1984, resulting in 147 useable returns. The sex breakdown was 88% females; 94% white with three percent blacks and three percent other minorities. See Table 1.

The second questionnaire provided 223 useable supervising teacher returns from a September, 1984, mailing to 320 teachers, giving a 70% return rate. The racial composition was 89% white, 9% black, and two percent other minorities.

The supervising teacher had usually supervised more than one student teacher; 18% had supervised one, 41% had supervised "2-5", 24% had supervised "6-10", and 17% had supervised "11 or more" student teachers. The grade levels of student teaching placement were: 36% K-3 (Early Childhood); 21% grades 4-6 (Intermediate); 25% grades 5-9 (Middle and Junior High); 15% grades 10-12 (Senior High); and 3% grades K-12. Table 1.

Table 1.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATE

	PRESERVICE %	INSERVICE %
GENDER		
Male	12	26
Female	88	74
GRADE LEVEL		
K-3	48	36
4-6	20	21
5-9	22	25
9-12	7	15
K-12	3	3
RACE		
Black	3	9
White	94	89
Other	3	2

In examining the professional relationship of the student teacher to other school personnel, the first question: "To whom did you give primary allegiance during student teaching?", indicated that the plurality of student teachers (46%) gave their first allegiance to the supervising teacher but an almost equal number (42%) perceived their pupils to be the first level of commitment. Only three percent held the college supervisor to be their primary agent of allegiance and the principal was selected by solely one percent of the student teachers. It is generally acknowledged in the teacher education literature that

cooperating teachers have more influence than college supervisors or professors on the kind of teachers student teachers become. (Corbett, 1980, p. 11) The student teacher responses in this case appear to confirm the limited role effectiveness of the college supervisor and principal. A related study found that student teachers were substantially influenced by the cooperating teacher. (Seperson and Joyce, 1973, p. 150)

This study reflected the findings reported in the articles cited above. In the category dealing with related professional development, the question was asked: "Who was your most frequent and helpful source of information in dealing with teaching problems?" The supervising teacher was the first choice in each of the five areas. Among the five areas, the percentage of student teachers selecting the supervising teacher as the "most important" category was as follows: Lesson Planning 82%, Discipline 97%; Classroom Management 89%; Teaching Techniques 85%; and Tests and Exams 83%. In each of the above areas, the college supervisor received 20% or less of "most important" ranking, and the principal received no higher than three percent first rank selection in any of those five areas. Overall, the college supervisor was the consistent but very weak second choice in the five areas. To address the extent that the supervising teacher is a sounding board for the student teacher, the question was asked: "With whom do you discuss most professional problems?", the supervising teacher was checked 49% of the time, the college supervisor 20%, other student teachers 18%,

personal friends 13% -- all sounding board for the student teachers. Interestingly, no one selected the principal as the person with whom they discussed professional problems. See Table 2.

Table 2.

RESPONSES TO SELECTED ITEMS

	PRESERVICE %	INSERVICE %
DISCUSS PROFESSIONAL PROBLEMS		
Principal	3	24
Department Chair	3	11
Supervisor	49	16
Colleagues	18	30
College Professor	20	10
Personal Friends	13	*
CONFORM TO IDEOLOGY		
Completely/greatly	49	60
Somewhat	44	38
Not at all	7	2
FACULTY LOUNGE		
Very much/much	40	12
Little/not at all	60	87
RESEARCH INFLUENCE ON TEACHING		
Very much/much	29	33
Some-none	71	67

*Not on Inservice Questionnaire

In examining the professional relationship of the supervising teachers to other school personnel, the first question asked was:

"With whom did you discuss most professional problems?" The primary selection was colleagues by 30% of the supervising teachers; the principal received 24% first choice checks; the supervisor 16%; the departmental chairperson 11%; and college professor with 10% checks was chosen least often. Interestingly, when compared with student teacher choices for discussing problems neither group of respondents perceived the principal to be a significant person with whom to discuss professional problems; although the supervising teacher ranked the principal as their second most likely choice.

Apparently, supervising teachers perceive that they are able to help student teachers grow very much in the important practical areas of teaching. To the question of: "In which areas were you able to provide the most help to student teachers?", a majority of supervisors rated their helpfulness as of "very much help" or "much help" in each of the five categories. In the area of planning, the supervising teacher responded to "very much help" 36%, to "much help" 40%, to so "some help" 20%. In the category of disciplinary techniques, supervising teachers were of "very much help" 41%, of "much help 39%, of "some help" 14%. In the area of general methods and techniques, they were of "very much help" 39%, of "much help" 42%, and of "some help" 15%. However, in the area of subject matter knowledge, supervising teachers felt that they were only able to provide "some help." This response is probably an accurate assessment because much of the necessary background in a content field should have been developed by the student

teacher in the academic major during the previous three or four years of college. Even son, 24% of the supervising teachers were of "very much help" and 27%, were of "much help" in developing subject matter knowledge. Similarly, in the area of communications and human relations a plurality of supervisors (45%) were only of "some help" and four percent were of "no help" in developing interaction skills. It seems generalizable that student teachers would emulate the total teaching behavior of the supervising teacher. (Kilgore, 1979, p. 12-12)

The student teacher response to the question: "To what extent do you have to conform to the ideology (teaching style and bureaucratic structure) of the supervising teacher?" was to be expected. Ninety-three percent of the student teachers feel some degree of necessity to conform, with 49% feeling the need to conform "completely" or "greatly." The supervising teachers indicated a higher degree of conformity. (See Table 2.) In a study of the significant others during the student teaching experience, 88% of the sample (60 student teachers) checked the cooperating teacher was the first or second most influential person for modeling their teaching. (Karmos and Jacko, 1977, p. 52)

The literature seems to indicate that the faculty lounge is a significant place of socialization for the student teacher as well as the first year teacher. The faculty lounge serves as a location where teachers and to a lesser degree student teachers (who are sometimes

warned of the dangers of "lipping off") may "let their hair down" and find sympathetic responses to their problems. It serves as a "protected area" where pupils, the principal, and parents are seldom seen, and as a place where teachers may smoke, eat, chat, and gossip with their colleagues. To some degree it is through these close and personal contacts that the novice is socialized into the profession. The response to the question: "To what extent did the faculty lounge and other informal contacts significantly influence your attitude towards the profession?", to some degree bears out this concept. Forty percent of the student teachers reported that their professional attitude was "very much" or "much" influenced by these contacts. However, it must be noted that 60% of the student teachers indicated that the lounge and other informal contacts influenced them "little" or "not at all." Perhaps student teachers do not realize the subtle changes that take place because of these contacts; moreover, some student teachers might be reticent to proclaim their attitudes are formulated here rather than through more professional channels such as the principal, college personnel, and professional literature. Contrastingly, supervisory teachers gave less importance to lounge information than did the student teachers. The supervising teachers rated its "influence much" three percent, the "much" category 9%, the "little" category 70%, and "not at all" 17%.

The follow-up question asked: "To what extent have research studies influenced your teaching?" The vast majority of student teachers (71%) reported that research was of minimal influence to their teaching. This is very unfortunate, since many student teachers really seem unaware of the relationship of research to methods of classroom teaching. Whose fault is this? Certainly not the principal nor the supervising teacher. The instruction should have already been dispensed by the college faculty. Coorespondingly, only three percent found research to be of "very much" influence and 23% selected the "much" category.

A recent study of six teacher-preparation institutions by Robby Champion investigated this problem. She interviewed 30 faculty members who teach undergraduate professional education courses and supervise student teachers. She found that these faculty members are suspicious of the usefulness and applicability of education research, as a matter of fact, "research is considered of no more value and possibly even less value than other informational sources. (Champion, 1984) p. 9-12 The achievement of the 1981 NASDTEC Standard which "requires study of research about teacher characteristics and behaviors as they effect the learner " (Standard 3.3 III) is unlikely to have significant impact unless and until the teacher trainee has a positive role model that believes in, practices, and models those concepts and skills of good teaching. The link between

research and its practice must come initially from the professional educator. Further studies should determine whether inservice programs and advanced university courses are acquainting teachers with research.

A related question of increasing importance as teacher education programs move from the realm of anecdotes and personal experiences to a sound research basis was: "To what extent have each of these persons made you aware of applications of research findings to teaching?" Bruce Joyce and Renee Clift state: "few teacher preparation institutions use research and development-based innovations even in teacher training." Also, they believe that the typical undergraduate program is insufficient to turn out teachers in the traditional four-year programs, consequently they suggest that "teacher education become a graduate program of study limited to research-oriented schools of education." (Joyce and Clift, 1984, p. 6 and 9) In the questionnaire returns, the student teachers indicated they had seldom been influenced towards research by any of their role models. In the rating of the degree of helpfulness "very much" the supervising teacher ranked first in giving research information (35%), the methods instructor (27%), student teaching peers (10%) and the principal was selected (3%). Even more appalling was the "very little" or "no" help categories where the principal received the highest level of 65 percent responses. The supervising teach responses to the question: "To what extent do educational research studies influence your teaching?" was somewhat disconcerting. The

overwhelming number of responses indicate the supervising teacher is presently an inadequate role model for the utilization of educational research. The supervising teachers selected "very much" 9%, the category of "much" 24%, "some" 56%, "little" 9%, and "not at all" two percent. That two-thirds of the responses were in the "some", "little", and "not at all" categories seems to be a crucial weakness in the knowledge base of supervising teachers in this student teaching program.

When the supervising teachers were asked to rate each of the four suggestions for improving the student teaching experience, it is significant that just as the student teacher would select only superior teachers for supervisory roles, so too did the supervising teacher think it was "most important" (18% responses) or "important" (36%) to "permit only the best education majors to student teach." To the question: "Should the student teaching experience be lengthened?" 36% of the supervising teachers responded that this was of "most importance", and 30% responded it to be "important." On the other hand, the supervising teachers thought that the number of observations by the college supervisor need not necessarily be increased; 32% of the teachers thought this to be of only "some importance", and 13% responded it to be "not important." Apparently, a significant number of supervising teachers (45%) did not perceive a significant value in those college supervisory observations. At this particular university the university supervisor typically makes an average of

just three observations.

Generally, a majority of supervising teachers considered their recent teacher to be either "well prepared" or "adequately prepared" in the five areas of planning, disciplinary techniques, communication skills. Only in one of these areas e.g., discipline, did supervising teachers indicate some weakness on the part of the interns in their teacher-education preparation program; 26% evaluated their student-teacher to be "weakly prepared" and 9% checked "inadequately prepared"; only 11% were "well prepared" and the majority of student teachers "adequately prepared" (52%) in discipline techniques. In the other four areas approximately two-thirds or more of the student teachers were judged to be satisfactorily to well prepared. In the area of planning, the supervisors checked 41% "well prepared" and 35% "adequately prepared." The responses to the category of general methods and techniques of teaching was 26% "well prepared" and 52% "adequately prepared." The student teacher judged themselves in the area of subject matter proficiency to be "well preared" 42% or at least "adequately prepared" 35%. Consequently, in the areas of planning, classroom management, and methodology the student teachers rated their preparation more highly than did supervising teachers, but both groups were approximately the same in the area of human relations skills and communication.

The last segment of the supervising teacher questionnaire paralleled several components of the student teacher inventory and sought

to evaluate the quality of current student teachers in terms of their level of preparation, knowledge and skills of teaching, and requested suggestions for improving the student teaching experience. Almost three-fourths of the student teachers (74%) were judged to be "excellent" 28% and of "good" (46%) quality. Not surprisingly, the student teachers rated their own professional knowledge and skills much more highly than the supervising teacher rated them.

In summary a comparison of the responses of the inservice and preservice teachers indicated many areas of agreement. Perhaps these similarities reflect the efforts of the socialization process. In general, both groups tend to evaluate those with whom they have frequent professional contact as must useful or influential.

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